

# Futures literacy in EIT Climate KIC: 2019–2020

Over the past year-and-a-half, EIT Climate KIC has engaged in a process of developing *futures literacy* across the KIC and in society via their Deep Demonstrations program. Driving this process is an initiative called Futures Literacy across the Deep (FLxDeep) led by the EIT Climate KIC partner University of Turku and involving five other EIT Climate KIC partners, in close coordination with EIT Climate KIC staff. The process has so far included the following activities.

## Integrating futures literacy into three Deep Demonstrations

### Longtermism

- This Deep Demonstration seeks to encourage financial, political, and societal actors to more frequently and more seriously consider longterm futures when making choices and taking action today.
- In 2019, a Futures Literacy Lab was held for key people in the sustainable finance sector Ireland, to test how this kind of multi-stakeholder workshop for introducing *future literacy* can catalyze innovation in a local network.
- In 2020, the Longtermism design team took futures literacy concepts and approaches into account while creating the Longtermism Portfolio Brief. This portfolio covers a wide range of levers for change, and is ready to activate.
- A few positions in the portfolio directly aim to foster development of futures literacy in broader society.
- This Deep Demonstration now seeks funders to activate the Longtermism Portfolio. The search is supported by diversifying how the team ‘imagines and uses’ different funding scenarios while selecting avenues to pursue.
- The Longtermism Deep Demonstration serves as home to the FLxDeep consortium which is conducting experiments about how to enable uptake of futures literacy in two other Deep Demonstrations.

### Maritime Hubs

- This Deep Demonstration seeks to enable worldwide transformation to a zero-net emissions maritime sector. It is demand-led, and has three Challenge Owners: in Valencia, Spain; Piraeus, Greece; and Cyprus.
- In 2019, FLxDeep organized a Futures Literacy Lab for this Deep Demonstration’s consortium of EIT Climate KIC staff, challenge owners, and partner organizations.
- In 2020, two FLxDeep partners and EIT Climate KIC staff experimented with integrating futures literacy into workshops that are part of the Deep Demonstrations method. These experiments produced early indicators of practical ways futures literacy concepts can support Deep Demonstration activity.
- The Maritime Hubs consortium participated in a four-module futures literacy training delivered online. The training was customized to the needs of the Challenge Owners and concluded with grounding exercises to help them ‘bring home’ this new skillset.
- A continuing goal of this engagement is to co-create daily work practices that support the development of futures literacy and its application to real-world innovation processes.

### Just Transformations

- This Deep Demonstration aims to enable communities to make a just transition from fossil-fuel dependent industry to a sustainable and resilient economic basis.
- Futures literacy efforts were brought to two communities – Rybnik, Poland where Just Transformations was already active, and Kozani, Greece that had not yet engaged with EIT Climate KIC. This work generated insights into how futures literacy catalyzes communities to produce enabling conditions for Deep Demonstrations.
- For Rybnik, Poland, where EIT Climate KIC was already active, FLxDeep partners co-designed and ran two Futures Literacy Labs for the city on topics selected by them.

- For Kozani, Greece, a FLxDeep partner established contact with a local champion, worked with them to co-create a Futures Literacy Lab for the community, recruited a university journalism program to cover the event as ‘journalists from the future’, and ran the lab.
- To enable an early and wide uptake of Futures Literacy, FLxDeep partners co-designed and ran a Futures Literacy Lab on the topic of ‘futures of justness’ for EIT Climate KIC staff from Just Transformations Deep Demonstrations.

## Cross-Cutting Activities

### Communicating Learnings and Impacts

- An intensive futures literacy training course was led by the UNESCO Chair in Futures Literacy at Hanze University of Applied Sciences team for 20 EIT Climate KIC staff who are involved in managing and orchestrating the Deep Demonstrations program.
- The FLxDeep consortium developed and tested creative reflection exercises to help deepen the learning of training participants while generating insights concerning the potentials of futures literacy for them. These tools were also tested as part of the work done in the above described Deep Demonstrations.
- Academically sound tools for detecting the effects of the training program were developed and tested.
- Additionally, the six FLxDeep consortium partners met frequently to share their insights, develop their own understandings of what futures literacy is and can do for the EIT Climate KIC Deep Demonstrations, and coordinate actions across their points of contact with Deep Demonstrations.
- Several dozen short exercises (< 30 minutes for 8-12 people) for practicing futures literacy were prototyped and evaluated. These are being compiled into a Futures Literacy Cookbook (forthcoming).

### Futures Literacy Ventures

- Building upon lessons learned by working with others in the Deep Demonstrations, FLxDeep consortium members combined their practical knowledge about introducing futures literacy to organizations to develop a prototype business model.
- The ventures team created a futures literacy capability building service offering and now is testing its viability.
- The prototype venture aims to be an interface between advanced academic understandings concerning futures literacy and business priorities.
- The prototype has so far received constructive feedback from EIT Climate KIC staff, the FLxDeep consortium partners, leaders from two large French companies, and two deans of business/economics schools.

## What’s next for Futures Literacy in Climate KIC?

EIT Climate KIC started its organizational futures literacy journey during a transition to a new strategic direction. Then and now, this KIC is open to making genuine efforts to develop futures literacy and apply it toward enabling transformational innovation to address the climate emergency. Nobody knows the future, and we cannot know what will happen when, or if, there is ever a more complete uptake of futures literacy in EIT Climate KIC. Yet, the potential value of making such efforts are clear. Futures Literacy—the skill of diversifying how and why people use futures—enables people and communities to identify meaningful opportunities for transformational innovation, learn from experiments, and continue to engage with uncertainty over the long haul. This journey of discovery and action has only just begun.

Futures literacy may very well prove to be *the essential skill* for people who seek to enable and navigate whole system transformations to address the climate crisis.